THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI A.K. ANTONY): (a) The Military Officers may deal with foreign missions for specific purposes after obtaining prior approval of competent authority.

(b) The Government of United States of America (USA) invites serving defence officers of India to visit the USA as part of their IMET programme (International Military Education and Training) and bilateral defence cooperation programme. Such visits are for the purposes of training and bilateral reciprocal visits.

(c) and (d) The Chief of Naval Staff had not raised any objections on such visits by defence personnel to the USA.

Army Cantonment in Hoshiyarpur

†1091. SHRI DHARAM PAL SABHARWAL: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government had considered to set up an army cantonment in the district of Hoshiyarpur a few years ago;

(b) whether it is also a fact that a survey has also been conducted by Government to set up a cantonment area;

(c) if so, the amount incurred on getting the survey done;

(d) the time it will take for the implementation of this scheme; and

(e) the details of the action taken in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI A.K. ANTONY): (a) There is no proposal for establishment of a cantonment under the Cantonments Act, 2006 at Hoshiyarpur District in Punjab.

(b) to (e) The question does not arise in view of reply to (a) above.

Shortage of Officers

1092. SHRI BALAVANT *ALIAS* BAL APTE:
SHRI VINAY KATIYAR:

Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is a shortage of officers in the Armed Forces of the country;

(b) if so, the details thereof, force-wise; and

(c) the steps taken/being taken by Government to fill the vacant posts in the Armed Forces?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI A.K. ANTONY): (a) to (c) There is a shortage of officer in the Armed Forces. The details are as follows:-

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.